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IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

I.

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,

That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibers net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy desire
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words, the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies:
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold:
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race"—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, "here to-day,"
Or "here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;

And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "this will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand.

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,

That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror's mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow's race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night:

I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travel'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies: O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying: "Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?"

And circle moaning in the air:
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of late
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
    The cattle huddled on the lea;
    And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver
    That all thy motions gently pass
    Athwart a plan of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
    And but for fear it is not so,
    The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
    And onward drags a laboring breast,
    And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

What words are these have fall'n from me?
    Can calm despair and wild unrest
    Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
    The touch of change in calm or storm;
    But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
    Hung in the shadow of a heaven?

Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunn'd me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind:
"It will be hard," they say, "to find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit:

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveler hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
"This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, "Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: "Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracks that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
And, crown'd with all the season lent,
From April unto April went,
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,

As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fall, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,

Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their Time? They too will die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentle feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"
And silence follow'd and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb, to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;

He told it not; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is their blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,
Whose faith has center everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;

Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is:

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
"The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:"

Might I not say? "Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive:"
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
"The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
"Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
"I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said),

"I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song."

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits render'd free,

Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,—
What whisper'd from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,

As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old:

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim:
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,

A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;

But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so tastes Lethean springs),
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Aganst the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I," and "me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his round, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all besides;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVIII.

If these briefs lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may fit,
And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds its sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip

Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;

And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII.

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved:
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
The Spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
Abide: thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl."

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth,
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:

An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone

She cries, "A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace; come away; the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: "Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centered passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX.

He past; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by:
At night she weeps, "How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?"

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,

Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The center of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream.

The limit of his narrower fate
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counselors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands;
"Does my old friend remember me?"

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With "Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls;

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillee to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost:
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs:
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
I found an angel of the night;

The voice was low, the look was bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last

A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up they vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath
I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds;

What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,

Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighted thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX.

"More than my brothers are to me,"—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same

All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And drop the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burthen of the weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence rich to soothe and save,
Unused exampled from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

"Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee."—Page 67.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
"My love shall now no further range;
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
"More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
"My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face:
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood.

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life with one
Of my own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, and call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrived at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

That reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;

And whether love for him have drain'd
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circles round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful chimes,
And show'd him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might express
All comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears:
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the streaming floods,
And spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
"Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall;
"'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, th' widow'd may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly.

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about.

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure-orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII.

Wild birds, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat:

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the lifelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man."
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest Heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,

To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the blue sea-bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
Of gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering; not a cricket chirr'd:
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone.

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,

In those fall'n leaves which kept their
green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keep thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyrial heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the specters of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;
He finds no misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
I look'd on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old had beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss:
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she signs
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand: I love."

XCVIII.

You leave us; you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,

When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That City. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Guard at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings;
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls:
They know me not, but mourn with me.

C.

I climb the hill: from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,

I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And leaving, these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And may a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twining round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard

The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII.

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me: distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the center stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, thro' veil'd, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever; then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go
They wept and wail'd, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander space,
The maidens gather'd strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb,
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:
"We served thee here," they said, "so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, "Enter likewise ye
And go with us:" they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the midst.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,

Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand:
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;

Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things e'en as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant, yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years:

The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why,

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the glided pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up forever at a touch,

And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour.

Large elements in order brought
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course.

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O, friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who greatest not alone in power

And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,

And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone;
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead;
Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue.

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead.
Are breathers of an ampler day
Forever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
And herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;

Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape

His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first; the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,

And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun.
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice "believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
She did but look through dimmer eyes:
Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Besunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags;
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,

O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil co-operant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and
came,

Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,

Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and again
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face

Salutes them—maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire.

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors;
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Results in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them in flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever live and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

THE LOVER'S TALE.

The original Preface to "The Lover's Tale" states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boy-like, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light—accompanied with a reprint of the sequel—a work of my mature life—"The Golden Supper?"

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT.

Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

Here far away, seen from the topmost cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacancies
Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas

Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down rare
sails,
White as white clouds, floated from sky to sky.
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,
Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,
Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
And withers on the breast of peaceful love;
Thou didst receive the growth of pines that
fledged
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love watcheth
Love,
In thine own essence, and delight thyself
To make it wholly thine on sunny days.
Keep thou thy name of "Lover's Bay." See,
sirs,
Even now the Goddess of the Past, that takes
The heart, and sometimes touches but one
string
That quivers, and is silent, and sometimes
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd chords
To some old melody, begins to play
That air which pleased her first. I feel thy
breath;
I come, great Mistress of the ear and eye:
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and tho' years
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy strait
Betwixt the native land of Love and me,
Breathe but a little on me, and the sail
Will draw me to the rising of the sun.
The lucid chambers of the morning star,

And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,

To pass my hand across my brows, and muse
On those dear hills, that never more will meet
The sight that throbs and aches beneath my
touch,
As tho' there beat a heart in either eye;
For when the outer lights are darken'd thus,
The memory's vision hath a keener edge.
It grows upon me now—the semicircle
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe
Of curving beach — its wreaths of dripping
green—
Its pale pink shells—the summerhouse aloft
That open'd on the pines with doors of glass,
A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat that
rock'd,
Light-green with its own shadow, keel to keel,
Upon the dappled dimplings of the wave,
That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!
They come, they crowd upon me all at once—
Moved from the cloud of unforgotten things,
That sometimes on the horizon of the mind
Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in storm—
Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me—days
Of dewy dawning and the amber eves
When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I
Were borne about the bay or safely moor'd
Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where the tide
Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all without
The slowly-ridging rollers on the cliffs,
Clash'd calling to each other, and thro' the
arch
Down those loud waters, like a setting star,

Mixt with the gorgeous west the lighthouse shone,
And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
Would often loiter in her balmy blue,
To crown it with herself.

Here too, my love
Wavered at anchor with me, when day hung
From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy halls;
Gleams of the water-circles as they broke,
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about her lips,
Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
Leapt like a passing thought across her eyes;
And mine with one that will not pass, till earth
And heaven pass too, dwelt on my heaven, a face
Most starry-fair, but kindled from within
As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-hair'd, dark-eyed:
Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance of them
Will govern a whole life from birth to death,
Careless of all things else, led on with light
In trances and in visions: look at them,
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
You cannot find their depth; for they go back,
And farther back, and still withdraw themselves
Quite into the deep soul, that evermore
Fresh springing from her fountains in the brain,
Still pouring thro' floods with redundant life
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
I should have died, if it were possible
To die in gazing on that perfectness
Which I do bear within me: I had died,
But from my farthest lapse, my latest ebb,
Thine image, like a charm of light and strength
Upon the waters, push'd me back again
On these deserted sands of barren life.
Tho' from the deep vault where the heart of Hope
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the dark—
Forgetting how to render beautiful
Her countenance with quick and healthful blood—
Thou didst not sway me upward; could I perish
While thou, a meteor of the sepulcher,
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's quiet urn
For ever? He, that saith it, hath o'erstept
The slippery footing of his narrow wit,
And fall'n away from judgment. Thou art light,
To which my spirit leaneth all her flowers,
And length of days, and immortality
Of thought, and freshness ever self-renew'd.
For Time and Grief abode too long with Life,
And, like all other friends i' the world, at last
They grew aweary of her fellowship:
So Time and Grief did beckon unto Death,
And Death drew nigh and beat the doors of Life;
But thou didst sit alone in the inner house,
A wakeful portress, and didst parle with Death,—

"This is a charmed dwelling which I hold;"
So Death gave back, and would no further come.
Yet is my life nor in the present time,
Nor in the present place. To me alone,
Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,
The Present is the vassal of the Past:
So that, in that I have lived, do I live,
And cannot die, and am, in having been—
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
Thrust forward on to-day and out of place;
A body journeying onward, sick with toil,
The weight as if of age upon my limbs,
The grasp of hopeless grief about my heart,
And all the senses weaken'd, save in that,
Which long ago they had glean'd and garner'd up
Into the granaries of memory—
The clear brow, bulwark of the precious brain,
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and all the while
The light soul twines and mingles with the growths
Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,
Married, made one with, molten into all
The beautiful in Past of act or place,
And like the all-enduring camel, driven
Far from the diamond fountain by the palms,
Who toils across the middle moonlit nights,
Or when the white heats of the blinding noons
Beat from the concave sand; yet in him keeps
A draught of that sweet fountain that he loves,

To stay his feet from falling, and his spirit
From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
When I began to love. How should I tell you?
Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
Flow back again unto my slender spring
And first of love, tho' every turn and depth
Between is clearer in my life than all
Its present flow. Ye know not what ye ask.
How should the broad and open flower tell
What sort of bud it was, when, prest together
In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken folds,
It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,
Yet was not the less sweet for that it seem'd?
For young Life knows not when young Life was born,
But takes it all for granted: neither Love,
Warm in the heart, his cradle, can remember
Love in the womb, but resteth satisfied,
Looking on her that brought him to the light:
Or as men know not when they fall asleep
Into delicious dreams, our other life,
So know I not when I began to love.
This is my sum of knowledge—that my love
Grew with myself—say rather, was my growth,
My inward sap, the hold I have on earth,
My outward circling air wherewith I breathe,
Which yet upholds my life, and evermore
Is to me daily life and daily death:
For how should I have lived and not have loved?
Can ye take off the sweetness from the flower,
The color and the sweetness from the rose,

And place them by themselves; or set apart
Their motions and their brightness from the
stars,
And then point out the flower or the star?
Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,
And tell me where I am? 'Tis even thus:
In that I live I love; because I love
I live: whate'er is fountain to the one
Is fountain to the other; and whene'er
Our God unknits the riddle of the one,
There is no shade or fold of mystery
Swathing the other.

Many, many years
(For they seem many and my most of life,
And well I could have linger'd in that porch,
So unproportion'd to the dwelling-place),
In the Maydews of childhood, opposite
The flush and dawn of youth, we lived together,
Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father died,
And he was happy that he saw it not;
But I and the first daisy on his grave
From the same clay into light at once.
As Love and I do number equal years,
So she, my love, is of an age with me.
How like each other was the birth of each!
On the same morning, almost the same hour,
Under the selfsame aspect of the stars
(Oh falsehood of all starcraft!), we were born.
How like each other was the birth of each!
The sister of my mother—she that bore
Camilla close beneath her beating heart,

Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,
With its true-touched pulses in the flow
And hourly visitation of the blood,
Sent notes of preparation manifold,
And mellow'd echoes of the outer world—
My mother's sister, mother of my love,
Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,
One twofold mightier than the other mas,
In giving so much beauty to the world,
And so much wealth as God had charged her with—
Loathing to put it from herself forever,
Left her own life with it; and dying thus,
Crown'd with her highest act the placid face
And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless
And I without a father. So from each
Of those two pillars which from earth uphold
Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all
The careful burthen of our tender years
Trembled upon the other. He that gave
Her life, to me delightfully fulfill'd
All lovingkindnesses, all offices
Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.
He waked for both: he pray'd for both: he slept
Dreaming of both: nor was his love the less
Because it was divided, and shot forth
Boughs on each side, laden with wholesome shade,
Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,
And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister: on one arm
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies
Wander'd, the while we rested: one soft lap
Pillow'd us both: a common light of eyes
Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence
The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,
One sustenance, which, still as thought grew large,
Still larger moulding all the house of thought,
Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps—
All—all but one; and strange to me, and sweet,
Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatsoe'er
Our general mother meant for me alone,
Our mutual mother dealt to both of us:
So what was earliest mine in earliest life,
I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,
They tell me, was a very miracle
Of fellow-feeling and communion.
They tell me that we would not be alone,—
We cried when we were parted; when I wept,
Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,
Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we loved
The sound of one-another's voices more
Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and learn'd
To lisp in tune together; that we slept
In the same cradle always, face to face,
Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,

"Made garlands of the self-same flower."—Page 131.
In Memoriam.

Folding each other, breathing on each other,
Dreaming together (dreaming of each other
They should have added), till the morning light
Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane
Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we woke
To gaze upon each other. If this be true,
At thought of which my whole soul languishes
And faints, and hath no pulse, no breath—as tho'
A man in some still garden should infuse
Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
Till, drunk with its own wine, and overfull
Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
It fall on its own thorns—if this be true—
And that way my wish leads me evermore
Still to believe it—'tis so sweet a thought,
Why in the utter stillness of the soul
Doth question'd memory answer not, nor tell
Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest harmony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely house,
Green prelude, April promise, glad new-year
Of Being, which with earliest violets
And lavish carol of clear-throated larks
Fill'd all the March of life!—I will not speak of thee;
These have not seen thee, these can never know thee,
They cannot understand me. Pass we then
A term of eighteen years. Ye would but laugh,
If I should tell you how I hoard in thought
The faded rhymes and scraps of ancient crones,

Gray relics of the nurseries of the world,
Which are as gems set in my memory,
Because she learnt them with me; or what use
To know her father left us just before
The daffodil was blown? or how we found
The dead man cast upon the shore? All this
Seems to the quiet daylight of your minds
But cloud and smoke, and in the dark of mine
Is traced with flame. Move with me to the event.

There came a glorious morning, such a one
As dawns but once a season. Mercury
On such a morning would have flung himself
From cloud to cloud, and swum with balanced wings
To some tall mountain: when I said to her,
"A day for Gods to stoop," she answered, "Ay,
And men to soar:" for as that other gazed,
Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
The prophet and the chariot and the steeds,
Suck'd into oneness like a little star,
Were drunk into the inmost blue, we stood,
When first we came from out the pines at noon,
With hands for eaves, uplooking and almost
Waiting to see some blessed shape in heaven,
So bathed we were in brilliance. Never yet
Before or after have I known the spring
Pour with such sudden deluges of light
Into the middle summer; for that day
Love, rising, shook his wings, and charged the winds

With spiced May-sweets from bound to bound, and blew
Fresh fire into the sun, and from within
Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent his soul
Into the songs of birds, and touch'd far-off
His mountain-altars, his high hills, with flame
Milder and pure.

Thro' the rocks we wound:
The great pine shook with lonely sounds of joy
That came on the sea-wind. As mountain streams
Our bloods ran free: the sunshine seem'd to brood
More warmly on the heart than on the brow.
We often paused, and, looking back, we saw
The clefts and openings in the mountains fill'd
With the blue valley and the glistening brooks,
And all the low dark groves, a land of love!
A land of promise, a land of memory,
A land of promise flowing with the milk
And honey of delicious memories!
And down to sea, and far as eye could ken,
Each way from verge to verge a Holy Land,
Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,
For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd
The grassy platform on some hill, I stoop'd,
I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her brows
And mine made garlands of the selfsame flower,

Which she took smiling, and with my work thus
Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or twice she told me
(For I remember all things) to let grow
The flowers that run poison in their veins.
She said, "The evil flourish in the world."
Then playfully she gave herself the lie—
"Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;
So, brother, pluck and spare not." So I wove
Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem, "whose flower,
Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,
Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,
Is without sweetness, but who crowns himself
Above the naked poisons of his heart
In his old age." A graceful thought of hers
Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how like a nymph,
A stately mountain nymph she look'd! how native
Unto the hills she trod on! While I gazed
My coronal slowly disentwined itself
And fell between us both; tho' while I gazed
My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of bliss
That strike across the soul in prayer, and show us
That we are surely heard. Methought a light
Burst from the garland I had wov'n, and stood
A solid glory on her bright black hair;
A light methought broke from her dark, dark eyes,
And shot itself into the singing winds;
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her white robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell about
My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came
To what our people call "The Hill of Woe."
A bridge is there, that, look'd at from beneath
Seems but a cobweb filament to link
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven chasm.
And thence one night, when all the winds were
loud,
A woful man (for so the story went)
Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd him-
self
Into the dizzy depth below. Below,
Fierce in the strength of far descent, a stream
Flies with a shatter'd foam along the chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown with
crags:
We mounted slowly; yet to both there came
The joy of life in steepness overcome,
And victories of ascent, and looking down
On all that had look'd down on us; and joy
In breathing nearer heaven; and joy to me,
High over all the azure-circled earth,
To breathe with her as if in heaven itself;
And more than joy that I to her became
Her guardian and her angel, raising her
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw
Beneath her feet the region far away,
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky brows,
Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,
And hollow lined and wooded to the lips,
And steep-down walls of battlemented rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into spires,
And glory of broad waters interfused,
Whence rose as it were breath and steam of gold,
And over all the great wood rioting
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at intervals
With falling brook or blossom'd bush—and last,
Framing the mighty landscape to the west,
A purple range of mountain-cones, between
Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding bursts
The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length
Descending from the point and standing both,
There on the tremulous bridge, that from beneath
Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in air,
We paused amid the splendor. All the west
And ev'n unto the middle south was ribb'd
And barr'd with bloom on bloom. The sun below,
Held for a space 'twixt cloud and wave, shower'd down
Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over
That various wilderness a tissue of light
Unparallel'd. On the other side, the moon,
Half-melted into thin blue air, stood still,
And pale and fibrous as a wither'd leaf,
Nor yet endured in presence of His eyes
To indue his lustres; most unloverlike,
Since in his absence full of light and joy,
And giving light to others. But this most,
Next to her presence whom I loved so well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost heart
As to my outward hearing; the loud stream,
Forth issuing from his portals in the crag
(A visable link unto the home of my heart),
Ran amber toward the west, and nigh the sea
Parting my own loved mountains was received
Shorn of its strength, into the sympathy
Of that small bay, which out to open main
Glow'd intermingling close beneath the sun.
Spirit of Love! that little hour was bound
Shut in from Time, and dedicate to thee:
Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it and the earth
They fell on became hallow'd evermore.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers were bright, and mine
Were dim with floating tears, that shot the sunset
In lightnings round me; and my name was borne
Upon her breath. Henceforth my name has been
A hallow'd memory like the names of old,
A center'd, glory-circled memory,
And a peculiar treasure, brooking not
Exchange or currency; and in that hour
A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist
Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,
A moment, ere the onward whirlwind shatter it,
Waver'd, and floated—which was less than Hope,
Because it lack'd the power of perfect Hope;

But which was more and higher than all Hope,
Because all other Hope had lower aim;
Even that this name to which her gracious lips
Did lend such gentle utterance, this one name,
In some obscure hereafter, might inwreathe
(How lovelier, nobler then!) her life, her love,
With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart and strength.

"Brother," she said, "let this be call'd henceforth
The Hill of Hope;" and I replied, "O sister,
My will is one with thine; the Hill of Hope."
Nevertheless, we did not change the name.
I did not speak; I could not speak my love,
Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in lip-depths.
Love wraps his wings on either side the heart,
Constraining it with kisses close and warm,
Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts
So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.
Else had the life of that delighted hour
Drunk in the largeness of the utterance
Of Love; but how should Earthly measure mete
The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited Love,
Who scarce can tune his high majestic sense
Unto the thundersong that wheels the spheres,
Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,
And flowing odor of the spacious air,
Scarce housed within the circle of this Earth,
Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,
Which pass with that which breathes them? Sooner Earth

Might go round Heaven, and the strait girth of Time
Inswath the fulness of Eternity,
Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy hour,
Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!
O Genius of that hour which dost uphold
Thy coronal of glory like a God,
Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,
Who walk before thee, ever turning round
To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim
With dwelling on the light and depth of thine,
Thy name is ever worship'd among hours!
Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,
For bliss stood round me like the light of Heaven—
Had I died then, I had not known the death;
Yea had the Power from whose right hand the light
Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand floweth
The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,
Whereof to all that draw the wholesome air,
Somewhile the one must overflow the other;
Then had he stemm'd my day with night, and driven
My current to the fountain whence it sprang—
Even his own abiding excellence—
On me, methinks, that shock of gloom had fall'n
Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged
The other, like the sun I gazed upon,
Which seeming for the moment due to death,

And dipping his head low beneath the verge,
Yet bearing round about him his own day,
In confidence of unabated strength,
Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven, from light to light,
And holdeth his undimmed forehead far
Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward hill;
We passed from light to dark. On the other side
Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,
Which none have fathom'd. If you go far in
(The country people rumor) you may hear
The moaning of the woman and the child,
Shut in the secret chambers of the rock.
I too have heard a sound—perchance of streams
Running far on within it inmost halls,
The home of darkness; but the cavern-mouth,
Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
Gives birth to a brawling brook, that passing lightly
Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,
Is presently received in a sweet grave
Of eglantines, a place of burial
Far lovelier than its cradle; for unseen,
But taken with the sweetness of the place,
It makes a constant bubbling melody
That drowns the nearer echoes. Lower down
Spreads out a little lake, that, floating, leaves
Low banks of yellow sand; and from the woods
That belt it rise three dark, tall cypresses—
Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,
That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,
And sitting down upon the golden moss,
Held converse sweet and low—low converse
sweet,
In which our voices bore least part. The wind
Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd
The waters, and the waters answering lisp'd
To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,
Fainted at intervals, and grew again
To utterance of passion. Ye cannot shape
Fancy so fair as is this memory.
Methought all excellence that ever was
Had drawn herself from many thousand years,
And all the separate Edens of this earth,
To center in this place and time. I listen'd,
And her words stole with most prevailing
sweetness
Into my heart, as thronging fancies come
To boys and girls when summer days are new,
And soul and heart and body are all at ease:
What marvel my Camilla told me all?
It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,
And I was as the brother of her blood,
And by that name I moved upon her breath;
Dear name, which had too much of nearness in
it
And heralded the distance of this time!
At first her voice was very sweet and low,
As if she were afraid of utterance;
But in the onward current of her speech
(As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks
Are fashion'd by the channel which they keep),
Her words did of their meaning borrow sound,
Her cheek did catch the color of her words.

I heard and trembled, yet I could but hear;
My heart paused—my raised eyelids would not fall,
But still I kept my eyes upon the sky,
I seem'd the only part of Time stood still,
And saw the motion of all other things;
While her words, syllable by syllable,
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear
Fell; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not to speak;
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,
What marvel my Camilla told me all?
Her maiden dignities of Hope and Love—
"Perchance," she said, "return'd." Even then the stars
Did tremble in their stations as I gazed;
But she spake on, for I did name no wish,
No wish—no hope. Hope was not wholly dead,
But breathing hard at the approach of Death—
Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
No longer in the dearest sense of mine—
For all the secret of her inmost heart,
And all the maiden empire of her mind,
Lay like a map before me, and I saw
There, where I hoped myself to reign as king,
There, where that day I crown'd myself as king,
There in my realm and even on my throne,
Another! then it seem'd as tho' a link
Of some tight chain within my inmost frame
Was riven in twain; that life I heeded not
Flow'd from me, and the darkness of the grave,
The darkness of the grave and utter night,

Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death.

Then had the earth beneath me yawning cloven
With such a sound as when an iceberg splits
From cope to base—had Heaven from all her doors,
With all her golden thresholds clashing, roll'd
Her heaviest thunder—I had lain as dead,
Mute, blind and motionless as then I lay;
Dead, for henceforth there was no life for me!
Mute, for henceforth what use were words to me!
Blind, for the day was as the night to me!
The night to me was kinder than the day;
The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly born
Of eyes too weak to look upon the light;
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
Frail Life was startled from the tender love
Of him she brooded over. Would I had lain
Until the plaited ivy tress had wound
'Round my worn limbs, and the wild brier had driven
Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining brows,
Leaning its roses on my faded eyes,
The wind had blown above me, and the rain
Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded snake
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of Love,
But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me. All too soon
Like (like a wanton too-officious friend,
Who will not hear denial, vain and rude
With proffer of unwish'd-for services)
Entering all the avenues of sense
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,
With hated warmth of apprehensiveness.
And first the chillness of the sprinkled brook
Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd to hear
Its murmur, as the drowning seaman hears.
Who with his head below the surface dropt
Listens the muffled booming indistinct
Of the confused floods, and dimly knows
His head shall rise no more; and then came in
The white light of the weary moon above,
Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.
Was my sight drunk that it did shape to me
Him who should own that name? Were it not well
If so be that the echo of that name
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn
A fashion and a phantasm of the form
It should attach to? Phantom!—had the ghastliest
That ever lusted for a body, sucking
The foul steam of the grave to thicken by it,
There in the shuddering moonlight brought its face
And what it has for eyes as close to mine
As he did—better that than this, than he
The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the beloved,
The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,

All joy, to whom my agony was a joy,
O how her choice did leap forth from his eyes!
O how her love did clothe itself in smiles
About his lips! and—not one moment's grace—
Then when the effect weigh'd seas upon my head
To come my way! to twit me with the cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all her ways
To him as me? Was not his wont to walk
Between the going light and growing night?
Had I not learnt my loss before he came?
Could that be more because he came my way?
Why should he not come my way if he would?
And yet to-night, to-night—when all my wealth
Flash'd from me in a moment and I fell
Beggar'd forever—why should he come my way
Robed in those robes of light I must not wear,
With that great crown of beams about his brows—
Come like an angel to a damned soul,
To tell him of the bliss he had with God—
Come like a careless and a greedy heir
That scarce can wait the reading of the will
Before he takes possession? Was mine a mood
To be invaded rudely, and not rather
A sacred, secret, unapproachable woe,
Unspeakable? I was shut up with Grief;
She took the body of my past delight,
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for herself,
And laid it in a sepulchre of rock
Never to rise again. I was led mute
Into her temple like a sacrifice;

I was the High Priest in her holiest place,
Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh, friend, thoughts deep and heavy as these well-nigh
O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he
Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm upstay'd.
I thought it was an adder's fold, and once
I strove to disengage myself, but fail'd,
Being so feeble: she bent above me too;
Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er of blight
Lives in the dewy touch of pity had made
The red rose there a pale one—and her eyes—
I saw the moonlight glitter on their tears—
And some few drops of that distressful rain
Fell on my face, and her long ringlets moved,
Drooping and beaten by the breeze, and brush'd
My fallen forehead in their to and fro,
For in the sudden anguish of her heart
Loosed from their simple thrall they had flow'd abroad,
And floated on and parted round her neck,
Mantling her form halfway. She, when I woke,
Something she ask'd, I know not what, and ask'd,
Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for the sound
Of that dear voice so musically low,
And now first heard with any sense of pain,
As it had taken life away before,
Choked all the syllables, that strove to rise
From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,
From his great hoard of happiness distill'd
Some drops of solace; like a vain rich man,
That, having always prosper'd in the world,
Folding his hands, deals comfortable words
To hearts wounded forever; yet, in truth,
Fair speech was his and delicate of phrase,
Falling in whispers on the sense, address'd
More to the inward than the outward ear,
As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,
Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the green
Of the dead spring: but mine was wholly dead,
No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for me.
Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd wrong?
And why was I to darken their pure love,
If, as I found, they two did love each other,
Because my own was darden'd? Why was I
To cross between their happy star and them?
To stand a shadow by their shining doors,
And vex them with my darkness? Did I love her?
Ye know that I did love her; to this present
My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did I love her,
And could I look upon her tearful eyes?
What had she done to weep? Why should she weep?
O innocent of spirit—let my heart
Break rather—whom the gentlest airs of Heaven
Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.
Her love did murder mine? What then? She deem'd

I wore a brother's mind: she call'd me brother:
She told me all her love: she shall not weep.

The brightness of a burning thought, awhile
In battle with the glooms of my dark will,
Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up
There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe
Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
As from a dismal dream of my own death,
I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;
I, for I loved her, grasped the hand she lov'd,
And laid it in her own, and sent my cry
Thro' the blank night to Him who loving made
The happy and the unhappy love, that He
Would hold the hand of blessing over them,
Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his bride!
Let them so love that men and boys may say,
"Lo! how they love each other!" till their love
Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all
Known, when their faces are forgot in the land—
One golden dream of love, from which may death
Awake them with heaven's music in a life
More living to some happier happiness,
Swallowing its precedent in victory.
And as for me, Camilla, as for me,—
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,
They will but sicken the sick plant the more.
Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,
So shalt thou love me still as sisters do;
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream but how

I could have loved thee, had there been none
else
To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I spake,
When I beheld her weep so ruefully;
For sure my love should ne'er indue the front
And mask of Hate, who lives on other's moans.
Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter
droughts,
And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!
Love passeth not the threshold of cold Hate,
And Hate is strange beneath the roof of Love.
O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these tears
Shed for the love of Love; for tho' mine
image,
The subject of thy power, be cold in her,
Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the source
Of these sad tears, and feeds their downward
flow.
So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to death,
Received unto himself a part of blame,
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,
Who, when the woful sentence hath been past,
And all the clearness of his fame hath gone
Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,
First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom awaked,
And looking round upon his tearful friends,
Forthwith and in his agony conceives
A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime—
For whence without some guilt should such
grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the abysm
Of forms outworn, but not to me outworn,

Who never hail'd another—was there one?
There might be one—one other, worth the life
That made it sensible. So that hour died
Like odor rapt into the winged wind
Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built, that they,
They—when their love is wreck'd—if Love can wreck—
On that sharp ridge of utmost doom ride highly
Above the perilous seas of Change and Chance;
Nay, more, hold out the lights of cheerfulness;
As the tall ship, that many a dreary year
Knit to some dismal sandbank far at sea,
All thro' the livelong hours of utter dark,
Showers slanting light upon the dolorous wave.
For me—what light, what gleam on those black ways
Where Love could walk with banish'd Hope no more?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters fair;
Love's arms were wreath'd about the neck of Hope,
And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew in her breath
In that close kiss, and drank her whisper'd tales.
They said that Love would die when Hope was gone,
And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd after Hope;

At last she sought out Memory, and they trod
The same old paths where Love had walk'd with Hope,
And Memory fed the soul of Love with tears.

II.

From that time forth I would not see her more;
But many weary moons I lived alone—
Alone, and in the heart of the great forest.
Sometimes upon the hills beside the sea
All day I watch'd the floating isles of shade,
And sometimes on the shore, upon the sands
Insensibly I drew her name, until
The meaning of the letters shot into
My brain; anon the wanton billow wash'd
Them over, till they faded like my love.
The hollow caverns heard me — the black brooks
Of the midforest heard me—the soft winds,
Laden with thistledown and seeds of flowers,
Paused in their course to hear me, for my voice
Was all of thee: the merry linnet knew me,
The squirrel knew me, and the dragon fly
Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.
The rough brier tore my bleeding palms; the hemlock,
Brow-high, did strike my forehead as I past;
Yet trod I not the wildflower in my path,
Nor bruised the wild bird's egg.

Was this the end?
Why grew we then together in one plot?

Why fed we from one fountain? drew one sun?
Why were our mothers branches of one stem?
Why were we one in all things, save in that
Where to have been one had been the cope at crown
Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that same nearness
Were father to this distance, and that one
Vauntcourier to this double? if Affection
Living slew Love and Sympathy hew'd out
The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the hill
Where last we roam'd together, for the sound
Of the loud stream was pleasant, and the wind
Came wooingly with woodbine smells. Sometimes
All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,
Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-cones
That spired above the wood; and with mad hand
Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-screen,
I cast them in the noisy brook beneath,
And watch'd them till they vanish'd from my sight
Beneath the bower of wreathed eglantines:
And all the fragments of the living rock
(Huge blocks, which some old trembling of the world
Had loosen'd from the mountain, till they fell
Half-digging their own graves) these in my agony
Did I make bare of all the golden moss,
Wherewith the dashing runnel in the spring

Had liveried them all over. In my brain
The spirit seem'd to flag from thought to thought,
As moonlight wandering thro' a mist: my blood
Crept like marsh drains thro' all my languid limbs;
The motions of my heart seem'd far within me,
Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its pulses;
And yet it shook me, that my frame would shudder,
As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.
But over the deep graves of Hope and Fear,
And all the broken palaces of the Past,
Brooded our master-passion evermore,
Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky
Above some fair metropolis, earth-shock'd,—
Hung round with ragged rims and burning folds,—
Embathing all with wild and woful hues,
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed masses
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,
And fused together in the tyrannous light—
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me!

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no more,
Some one had told me she was dead, and ask'd
If I would see her burial: then I seem'd
To rise, and through the forest-shadow borne
With more than mortal swiftness, I ran down
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
The rear of a procession, curving round
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of which

Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest lawn,
Wreathed round the bier with garlands: in the distance,
From out the yellow woods upon the hill
Look'd forth the summit and the pinnacles
Of a gray steeple—thence at intervals
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,
Save those six virgins which upheld the bier,
Were stoled from head to foot in flowing black;
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd his brow,
And he was loud in weeping and in praise
Of her, we follow'd: a strong sympathy
Shook all my soul: I flung myself upon him
In tears and cries: I told him all my love,
How I had loved her from the first; whereat
He shrank and howl'd, and from his brow drew back
His hand to push me from him; and the face,
The very face and form of Lionel
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my innermost brain,
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and fall,
To fall and die away. I could not rise
Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,
The lordly Phantasms! in their floating folds
They past and were no more: but I had fallen
Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

Alway the inaudible invisible thought,
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded the audible and visible;
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf and wind,

Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain;
The cloud pavilion'd element, the wood
The mountain, the three cypresses, the cave,
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the moon
Below black firs, when silent-creeping winds
Laid the long nights in silver streaks and bars,
Were wrought into the tissue of my dream:
The moanings in the forest, the loud brook,
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dorhawk-whirr
Awoke me not, but were a part of sleep,
And voices in the distance calling to me
And in my vision bidding me dream on
Like sounds without the twilight realm of dreams,
Which wander round the bases of the hills,
And murmer at the low-drop eaves of sleep,
Half entering the portals. Oftentimes
The vision had fair prelude, in the end
Opening on darkness, stately vestibules
To caves and shows of Death: whether the mind,
With some revenge—even to itself unknown,—
Made strange division of its suffering
With her, whom to have suffering view'd had been
Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed spirit,
Being bunted in the Present, grew at length
Prophetical and prescient of whate'er
The future had in store: or that which most
Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit
Was of so wide a compass it took in
All I had loved, and my dull agony,

Ideally to her transferr'd became
Anguish intolerable.

—The day waned;
Alone I sat with her: about my brow
Her warm breath floated in the utterance
Of silver-corded tones: her lips were sunder'd
With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke in light
Like morning from her eyes—her eloquent eyes,
(As I have seen many a hundred times)
Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine down rain'd
Their spirit searching splendors. As a vision
Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd
In damp and dismal dungeons underground
Confined on points of faith, when strength is shock'd
With torment, and expectancy of worse
Upon the morrow, thro, the ragged walls,
All unawares before his half-shut eyes,
Comes in upon him in the dead of night,
And with the excess of sweetness and of awe,
Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run over
Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes
Shone on my darkness, forms which ever stood
Within the magic cirque of memory,
Invisible but deathless, waiting still
The edict of the will to assume
The semblance of those rare realities
Of which they were the mirrors. Now the light

Which was their life, burst through the cloud
of thought
Keen, irrepressible.
It was a room
Within the summer-house of which I spake,
Hung round with paintings of the sea, and one
A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow
Clambering, the mast bent and the raving wind
In her sail roaring. From the other day,
Betwixt the close set ivies came a broad
And solid beam of isolated light
Crowed with driving atomies, and fell
Slanting upon that picture, from prime youth
Well-known well-loved. She drew it long ago
Forth gazing on the waste and open sea,
One morning when the upblown billows ran
Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had pour'd
Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms
Colour and life: it was a bond and seal
Of friendship, spoken of with tearful smiles;
A monument of childhood and of love;
The poesy of child; my lost love
Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it together
In mute and glad remembrance, and each heart
Grew closer to the other, and the eye
Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing like
The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-couch'd—
A beauty which is death; when all at once
That painted vessel, as with inner life,
Began to heave upon that painted sea;
An earthquake, my loud heart-beats made the
ground
Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life
And breath and motion, past and flow'd away

To those unreal billows: round and round
A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty gyres
Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind driven
Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she shriek'd;
My heart was cloven with pain; I wound my arms
About her: we whirl'd giddily; the wind
Sung; but I clasped her without fear: her weight
Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim eyes,
And parted lips, which drank her breath, down-hung
The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from me flung
Her empty phantom: all the sway and whirl
Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I
Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and ever.

III.

I came one day and sat among the stones
Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave;
A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over
The rippling levels of the lake, and blew
Coolness and moisture and all smells of bud
And foliage from the dark and dripping woods
Upon my fever'd brows that shook and throbb'd
From temple unto temple. To what height
The day had grown I knew not. Then came on me
The hollow tolling of the bell, and all
The vision of the bier. As heretofore
I walked behind with one who veil'd his brow

Methought by slow degrees the sullen bell
Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the shore
Sloped into louder surf: those that went with me,
And those that held the bier before my face,
Moved with one spirit round about the bay,
Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd with these
In marvel at that gradual change, I thought
Four bells instead of one began to ring,
Four merry bells, four merry marriage-bells,
In clanging cadence jangling peal on peal—
A long loud clash of rapid marriage-bells.
Then those who led the van, and those in rear,
Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bacchanals
Fled onward to the steeple in the woods:
I, too, was borne along and felt the blast
Beat on my heated eyelids: all at once
The front rank made a sudden halt; the bells
Lapsed into frightful stillness; the surge fell
From thunder into whispers; those six maids
With shrieks and ringing laughter on the sand
Threw down the bier; the woods upon the hill
Waved with a sudden gust that, sweeping down,
Took the edges of the pall, and blew it far
Until it hung, a little silver cloud
Over the sounding seas: I turned: my heart
Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the hand,
Waiting to see the settled countenance
Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading flowers.
But she from out her death-like chrysalis,
She from her bier, as into fresher life,
My sister, and my cousin, and my love,
Leapt lightly clad in bridal white—her hair

Studded with one rich Provence rose—a light
Of smiling welcome round her lips—her eyes
And cheeks as bright as when she climb'd the
hill.
One hand she reach'd to those that came behind
And while I mused nor yet endured to take
So rich a prize, the man who stood with me
Stept gaily forward, throwing down his robes,
And claspt her hand in his: again the bells
Jangled and clang'd: again the stormy surf
Crash'd in the shingle: and the whirling rout
Led by those two rush'd into dance, and fled
Wind-footed to the steeple in the woods,
Till they were swallow'd in the leafy bowers,
And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.

There, there, my latest vision—then the event!

IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.*

(Another speaks.)

He flies the event: he leaves the event to me:
Poor Julian—how he rush'd away; the bells,
Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and heart—
But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,
As who should say "Continue," Well we had
One golden hour—of triumph shall I say?
Solace at least—before he left his home.

Would you had seen him in that hour of his?
He moved thro' all of it majestically—
Restrain'd himself quite to the close—but now—

Whether they were his lady's marriage-bells,
Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
I never ask'd: but Lionel and the girl
Were wedded, and our Julian came again
Back to his mother's house among the pines.
But these, their gloom, the mountains and the Bay,
The whole land weigh'd him down as Ætna does

* This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio.

The Giant of Mythology: he would go,
Would leave the land for ever, and had gone
Surely, but for a whisper, "Go not yet,"
Some warning—sent divinely—as it seem'd
By that which follow'd—but of this I deem
As of the visions that he told—the event
Glanced back upon them in his after life,
And partly made them—tho' he knew it not.
And thus he stay'd and would not look at her—
No not for months: but, when the eleventh moon
After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
Heard yet once more the tolling bell, and said,
Would you could toll me out of life, but found—
All softly as his mother broke it to him—
A crueller reason than a crazy ear,
For that low knell tolling his lady dead—
Dead—and had lain three days without a pulse:
All that look'd on her had pronounced her dead.
And so they bore her (for in Julian's land
They never nail a dumb head up in elm).
Bore her free-faced to the free airs of heaven,
And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die: he is here and hale—
Not plunge headforemost from the mountain there,
And leave the name of Lover's Leap: not he:
He knew the meaning of the whisper now,
Thought that he knew it. "This, I stay'd for this;
O love, I have not seen you for so long.

Now, now, will I go down into the grave,
I will be all alone with all I love,
And kiss her on her lips, She is his no more:
The dead returns to me, and I go down
To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so
He rose and went, and entering the dim vault,
And, making there a sudden light; beheld
All round about him that which all will be.
The light was but a flash, and went again.
Then at the far end of the vault he saw
His lady with the moonlight on her face;
Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
Of black and bands of silver, which the moon
Struck from an open grating overhead
High in the wall, and all the rest of her
Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass, to sleep,
To rest, to be with her—till the great day
Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,
And raised us hand in hand." And kneeling there
Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,
Dust, as he said, that once was loving hearts,
Hearts that had beat with such a love as mine—
Not such as mine, no, nor for such as hers—
He softly put his arm about her neck
And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless death
And silence made him bold—nay, but I wrong him,

He reverenced his dear lady even in death;
But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
"O, you warm heart," he moan'd, "not even death
Can chill you all at once:" then starting, thought
His dreams had come again. "Do I wake or sleep?
Or am I made immortal, or my love
Mortal once more?" It beat—the heart—it beat:
Faint—but it beat: at which his own began
To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd
The feebler motion underneath his hand.
But when at last his doubts were satisfied,
He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
And, wrapping her all over with the cloak
He came in, and now striding fast, and now
Sitting a while to rest, but evermore
Holding his golden burthen in his arms,
So bore her thro' the solitary land
Back to the mother's house where she was born.

There the good mother's kindly ministering,
With half a night's appliances, recall'd
Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye that ask'd
"Where?" till the things familiar to her youth
Had made a silent answer: then she spoke
"Here! and how came I here?" and learning it
(They told her somewhat rashly as I think)
At once began to wander and to wail,

"Ay, but you know that you must give me back:
Send! bid him come;" but Lionel was away—
Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none knew where.
"He casts me out," she wept, "and goes"—a wail
That seeming something, yet was nothing, born
Not from believing mind, but shatter'd nerve,
Yet haunting Julian, as her own reproof
At some precipitance in her burial.
Then, when her own true spirit had return'd,
"Oh yes, and you," she said, "and none but you?
For you have given me life and love again,
And none but you yourself shall tell him of it,
And you shall give me back when he returns."
"Stay then a little,' answered Julian, "here,
And keep yourself, none knowing, to yourself;
And I will do your will. I may not stay,
No, not an hour; but send me notice of him
When he returns, and then will I return,
And I will make a solemn offering of you
To him you love." And faintly she replied,
"And I will do your will, and none shall know."

Not know? with such a secret to be known.
But all their house was old and loved them both,
And all the house had known the loves of both;
Had died almost to serve them any way,
And all the land was waste and solitary:
And then he rode away; but after this,

An hour or two, Camilla's travail came
Upon her, and that day a boy was born,
Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
There fever seized upon him: myself was then
Traveling that land, and meant to rest an hour;
And sitting down to such a base repast,
It makes me angry yet to speak of it—
I heard a groaning overhead, and climb'd
The moulder'd stairs (for everything was vile)
And in a loft, with none to wait on him,
Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
Raving of dead men's dust and beating hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!
But there from fever and my care of him
Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.
For while we roam'd along the dreary coast,
And waited for her message, piece by piece
I learnt the drearier story of his life;
And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,
Found that the sudden wail his lady made
Dwelt in his fancy· did he know her worth,
Her beauty even? should he not be taught,
Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,
The value of that jewel he had to guard?
Suddenly came her notice and we past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind, the soul:
That makes the sequel pure; tho' some of us

Beginning at the sequel know no more.
Not such am I: and yet I say the bird
That will not hear my call, however sweet,
But if my neighbor whistle answers him—
What matter? there are others in the wood.
Yet when I saw her (and I thought him crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
A cell and keeper), those dark eyes of hers—
Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes alone,
But all from these to where she touch'd on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came
To greet us, her young hero in her arms:
"Kiss him," she said. "You gave me life again.
He, but for you, had never seen it once.
His other father you! Kiss him, and then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart! his own
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him there.

But he was all the more resolved to go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying him
By that great love they both had borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour with him
Before he left the land for evermore;
And then to friends—they were not many—who lived

Scatteringly about that lonely land of his,
And bade them to a banquet of farewells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I never
Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall
From column on to column, as in a wood,
Not such as here—an equatorial one,—
Great garlands swung and blossom'd; and beneath,
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of Art,
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven knows when,
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years of gloom,
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups
Where nymph and god ran ever round in gold—
Others of glass as costly—some with gems
Movable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value—Ah heavens!
Why need I tell you all?—suffice to say
That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guests: and they, the guests,
Wonder'd at some strange light in Julian's eyes
(I told you that he had his golden hour),
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his
And that resolved self-exile from a land
He never would revisit, such a feast,
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n than rich,
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the hall
Two great funeral curtains, looping down,
Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid the frame.
And just above the parting was a lamp:
So the sweet figure folded round with night
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with a smile.

Well then—our solemn feast—we ate and drank,
And might—the wines being of such nobleness—
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,
And something weird and wild about it all:
What was it? for our lover seldom spoke,
Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his use;
And when the feast was near an end, he said:

"There is a custom in the Orient, friends—
I read of it in Persia—when a man
Will honor those who feast with him, he brings
And shows them whatsoever he accounts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.
This custom——"

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with meeting hands
And cries about the banquet—"Beautiful!
Who could desire more beauty at a feast?"

The lover answer'd, "There is more than one
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me not
Before my time, but hear me to the close.
This custom steps yet further when the guest
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.
For after he hath shown him gems or gold,
He brings and sets before him in rich guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as these,
The beauty that is dearest to his heart—
'O my heart's lord, would I could show you,' he says,
'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose to-night
To show you what is dearest to my heart,
And my heart too.

"But solve me first a doubt.
I knew a man, nor many years ago;
He had a faithful servant, one who loved
His master more than all on earth beside.
He falling sick, and seeming close on death,
His master would not wait until he died,
But bad his menials bear him from the door,
And leave him in the public way to die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took him home,
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved his life.
I ask you now, should this first master claim
His service, whom does it belong to? him
Who thrust him out, or him who saved his life?"

This question, so flung down before the guests,

And balanced either way by each, at length
When some were doubtful how the law would
hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of phrase.
And he beginning languidly—his loss
Weigh'd on him yet—but warming as he went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass it by,
Affirming that as long as either lived,
By all the laws of love and gratefulness,
The service of the one so saved was due
All to the saver—adding, with a smile,
The first for many weeks—a semi-smile
As at a strong conclusion—"body and soul
And life and limbs, all his to work his will."

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
To bring Camilla down before them all.
And crossing her own picture as she came,
And looking as much lovelier as herself
Is lovelier than all others—on her head
A diamond circlet, and from under this
A veil, that seemed no more than gilded air,
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern gauze
With seeds of gold—so, with that grace of hers,
Slow-moving as a wave against the wind,
That flings a mist behind it in the sun—
And bearing high in arms the mighty babe,
The younger Julian, who himself was crown'd
With roses, none so rosy as himself—
And over all her babe and her the jewels
Of many generations of his house

Sparkled and flash'd, for he had decked them
out
As for a solemn sacrifice of love—
So she came in:—I am long in telling it,
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,
Sad, sweet, and strange together—floated in—
While all the guests in mute amazement rose—
And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
Before the board, there paused and stood, her
breast
Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her feet,
Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
But him she carried, him nor lights nor feast
Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men; who cared
Only to use his own, and staring wide
And hungering for the gilt and jewell'd world
About him, look'd, as he is like to prove,
When Julian goes, the lord of all he saw.

"My guests," said Julian: "you are honor'd
now
E'en to the uttermost: in her behold
Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
Of all things upon earth the dearest to me."
Then waving us a sign to seat ourselves,
Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face
Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
Thrice in a second, felt him tremble too,
And heard him muttering, "So like, so like;
She never had a sister. I knew none.
Some cousin of his and hers—O God, so like!"
And then he suddenly ask'd her if she were.

She shook, and cast her eyes down, and was
dumb.
And then some other question'd if she came
From foreign lands, and still she did not speak.
Another, if the boy were hers: but she
To all their queries answer'd not a word,
Which made the amazement more, till one of
them
Said, shuddering, "Her spectre!" But his
friend
Replied, in half a whisper, "Not at least
The spectre that will speak if spoken to.
Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
Prove, as I almost dread to find her, dumb!"

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd all:
"She is but dumb, because in her you see
That faithful servant whom we spoke about,
Obedient to her second master now;
Which will not last.
I have here to-night a guest
So bound to me by common love and loss—
What! shall I bind him more? in his behalf,
Shall I exceed the Persian, giving him
That which of all things is the dearest to me,
Not only showing? and he himself pronounced
That my rich gift is wholly mine to give.

"Now all be dumb, and promise all of you
Not to break in on what I say by word
Or whisper, while I show you all my heart."
And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily—

The passionate moment would not suffer that—
Past thro' his visions to the burial; thence
Down to this last strange hour in his own hall;
And then rose up, and with him all his guests
Once more as by enchantment; all but he,
Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell again,
And sat as if in chains—to whom he said:

"Take my free gift, my cousin, for your wife;
And were it only for the giver's sake,
And tho' she seem so like the one you lost,
Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
Lest there be none left here to bring her back:
I leave this land forever." Here he ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one hand,
And bearing on one arm the noble babe,
He slowly brought them both to Lionel.
And there the widower husband and dead wife
Rush'd each at each with a cry, that rather seem'd
For some new death than for a life renew'd;
Whereat the very babe began to wail;
At once they turn'd, and caught and brought him in
To their charm'd circle, and, half killing him
With kisses, round him closed and claspt again.
But Lionel, when at last he freed himself
From wife and child, and lifted up a face
All over-glowing with the sun of life,
And love, and boundless thanks—the sight of this
So frighted our good friend, that turning to me

And saying, "It is over: let us go"—
There were our horses ready at the doors—
We bade them no farewell, but mounting these
He past for ever from his native land;
And I with him, my Julian, back to mine.

TO

ALFRED TENNYSON,

MY GRANDSON.

Golden-hair'd Ally whose name is one with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.

THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

"Wait a little," you say, "you are sure it'll all come right,"
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white:
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—No, no, you are doing me wrong!
Harry and I were married. the boy can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;
I ha' worked for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if you can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife;

I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play;
He workt me the daisy-chain—he made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude, an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry—I had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an' for years;
I walked with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted in tears.
The boat was beginning to move, we heard them a-ringing the bell,
"I'll never love any but you, God bless you, my own little Nell."

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her alone with her sin an' her shame,

And so she was wicked with Harry; the girl
was the most to blame.

v.

And years went over till I that was little had
grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids, "Our Nelly's
the flower of 'em all."
I didn't take heed o' them, but I taught myself
all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when Harry
came home for good.

vi.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy,
too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields, "I'll never
love any but you;"
"I'll never love any but you," the morning
song of the lark,
"I'll never love any but you," the nightingale's
hymn in the dark.

vii.

And Harry came home at last, but he look'd
at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many
years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—that I
might ha' forgot him somehow—
For he thought—there were other lads—he was
fear'd to look at me now.

VIII.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were married o' Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all as merry as May—
Those were the pleasant times, my house an' my man were my pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-sailing with wind an' tide.

IX.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see if work could be found;
An' he wrote, "I ha' six weeks' work, little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss you before I go."

X.

So I set to righting the house, for wasn't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand in a hornet's nest.

XI.

"Sweetheart"—this was the letter—this was the letter I read—

"You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish I was dead—
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you haven't done it, my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away, an' I wish that I had."

XII.

I, too, wish that I had—in the pleasant times that had past,
Before I quarrel'd with Harry—my quarrel—the first an' the last.

XIII.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that drove me wild
An' he told me all at once, as simple as any child,
"What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife;
An' she wasn't one o' the worst." "Then," I said, "I'm none o' the best."
An' he smiled at me, "Ain't you, my love? Come, come, little wife, let it rest!
The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir."
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said, "You were keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before."
An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle way,
"Let bygones be!"
"Bygones! you kept yours hush'd," I said,
"when you married me!
By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' she—in her shame an' her sin—
You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in!
You'll make her its second mother! I hate her —an' I hate you!"
Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue
Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right."

XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an', when he came in
I felt that my heart was hard, he was all wet thro' to the skin,
An' I never said "off wi' the wet," I never said "on wi' the dry,"
So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me good-bye.
"You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't true, you know;
I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss me before I go?"

XV.

"Going! you're going to her—kiss her—if you will," I said,—

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head—
"I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!"—I didn't know well what I meant,
But I turn'd my face from him, an' he turn'd his face an' he went.

XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, "I've gotten my work to do;
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat."

XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,
An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me.
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right"—
An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH.

17—.

I.

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out to me."
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

III.

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have hidden them all.

What am I saying? and what are you? do you
come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls
so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—
what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have
spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of
their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and be-
gun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should
you know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bit-
ter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you
were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now
you may go your way.

VI.

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an
old dying wife,
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only
an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went
out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said, and he
never has told me a lie.

I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when
he was but a child—
"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he
was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Will—he
never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he
would have been one of his best.

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they
never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and
he swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse,
and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows—I'll none of it,
said my son.

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers.
I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they
kill'd him for robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show—we
had aways borne a good name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—
isn't that enough shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they
set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at
him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-back raven and hor-
rible fowls of the air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him and hang'd him there.

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. "O mother!" I heard him cry,
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up; they fasten'd me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!"—he call'd in the dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their will.

XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laugned and had cried—

Theirs? O no! they are mine—not theirs—
they had moved in my side.

XII.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I
kiss'd em, I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the
churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet
of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him
in holy ground.

XIII.

They would scratch him up—they would hang
him again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—let all
that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good
will toward men—
"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord"—
let me hear it again;
"Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffer-
ing." Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the
Savior lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except for the
worst of the worst,
And the first may be last—I have heard it in
church—and the last may be first.
Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as the Lord
must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and
the shower and the snow.

XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you
he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are they his mother?
are you of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm
on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea
that 'll moan like a man?

XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all
very well,
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not
find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord
has look'd into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with
Willy, I know not where.

XVI.

And if he be lost—but to save my soul, that is
all your desire:
Do you think that I care for my soul if my
boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark—go, go,
you may leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as
hard as a stone.

XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you
mean to be kind,

But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's
voice in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but
to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church, and
not from the gibbet—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—
shaking the walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud——Good-night.
I am going. He calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

I.

Waait till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights* to tell.
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an' well.
"Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon†!"
Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors a' seean an' a'doon;
"Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?" I 'a nowt but Adam's wine:
What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the 'eät o' the line?

II.

"What's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?" I'll tell tha. Gin.
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down to the inn.

* The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craiin'*, *daiin'*, *whai*, *ai* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

† The *oo* short as in "wood."

Naay—fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha was iver sa dry,
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur it? back-end o' June,
Ten years sin', and wa' greed as well as a fiddle i' tune:
I could fettle and clump owd boöts and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as 'appy as 'art could think,
An' then the babby wur burn, and then I taäkes to the drink.

IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be hafe shaämed on it now,
We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could sing a good song at the Plow;
Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted my huck,*
An' I coom'd neck-and-crop soomtimes slaäpe down i' the squad an' the muck:
An' once I fowt wi' the Taïläor—not hafe ov a man, my lad—
Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce like a cat, an it maäde 'er sa mad
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,† an' raäted ma, "Sottin' thy braäins

* Hip. † Scold.

"The battle-thunder broke from them all."—Page 203.
In Memoriam.

Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'* about i' the laänes,
Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not touch thy 'at to the Squire;"
An' a loök'd cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire:
But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as a king,
Foälks coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brokken string.

v.

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks' cloäths to keep the wolf fro' the door,
Eh, but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor,
Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,
An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

vi.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose at a faäir,
An' she wur'a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' and teärin' 'er 'aäir,
An' I tummled athurt the craädle an' sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick
O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our Sally a kick,
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she an' the babby beäl'd,†

* Lounging. † Bellowed, cried out.

Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd that our Sally went laämed
Cos'o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful ashaämed;
An' Sally wur sloomy* an' dragle taäled in an owd turn gown,
An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally so pratty an' neät an' sweeät,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro' 'eäd to feeät:
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a Sunday at murn,
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined like a sparkle o' fire.
"Doesn't tha see 'im," she axes, "fur I can see 'im?" an' I
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
An' I says "I mun gie tha a kiss," an' Sally says "Noä, thou moänt,"

* Sluggish, out of spirits.

But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an' Sally says "doänt!"

IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at fust she wur all in a tew,
But, arter we sing'd the 'ymn togither like birds on a beugh;
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an' the loov o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire—thaw theer's na drinkin' i' Hell;
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as well as afoor.

XI.

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blubber'd awaäy o' the bed—
"Weänt niver do it naw moor;" an' Sally looäkt up an' she said,
"I'll upowd it* tha weänt; thou'rt like the rest o' the men,
Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha does it agèan.

* I'll uphold it.

Ther's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws, as
knaws tha sa well,
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha'll fol-
ler 'im slick into Hell."

XII.

"Naäy," says I, "fur I weänt goä sniffin'
about the tap."
"Weänt tha?" she says, an' mysen I thowt i'
mysen "mayhap."
"Noä:" an' I started awaäy like a shot, an'
down to the Hinn,
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer,
yon big black bottle o' gin.

XIII.

"That caps owt,*" says Sally, an' saw she be-
gins to cry,
But I puts it inter'er 'ands an' I says to 'er,
"Sally," says I,
"Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord an'
the power ov 'is Graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll loök my hennemy
strait i' the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma loök
at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's the
Divil's oän sen."

XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't do naw
work an' all,

* That's beyond everything.

Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd my
'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an' sattled
'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän I
feel'd mysen free.

XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk stood a-
gawmin'* in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd instead of a
quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an' I wur
chousin' the wife,
For I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it nob-
but to saäve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is
airm, an 'e shaws it to me,
"Feeal thou this! thou can't graw this upo'
watter!" says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as can-
dles was lit,
"Thou moänt do it," he says, "tha mun breäk
'im off bit by bit."
"Thou'rt but a Methody-man," says Parson,
and laäys down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, "but I re-
specks tha fur that;"
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down fro'
the 'All to see,
An' 'e spanks 'is 'and into mine, "fur I re-
specks tha," says 'e;

* Staring vacantly.

An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the boöts to be cobbled fro' hafe the coontryside.

XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother kind of aäwaäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

XVII.

Would'nt a pint a' sarved as well as a quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur I'd feäl mysen cleän disgraäced.

XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, "My lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Divil's in 'im," said I.
But arter I chänged my mind, an' if Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im afoor the Throän.

XIX.

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin' along the streeät,
Does'nt tha knaw 'er—sa pratty, an' feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be a-goin' to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-puddin'* an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blooäd, no, not fur Sally's oän kin.

* A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,

To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

III.

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good English men.

Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children
of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil
yet."

v.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we
roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart
of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her
ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to
the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long
sea-lane between.

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from
their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the
mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of
fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her
yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip hung
above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,

Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the
starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought
herself and went
Having that within her womb that had left her
ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they
fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes
and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog
that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars came
out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one
and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship the whole night long, their high-
built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her
battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew
back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd,
and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the
world before?

x.

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

xi.

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;

But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

XII.

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;

I have only done my duty as a man is bound
to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville
die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had been so
valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain
so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his
English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught
they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down into
the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier
alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd
for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd
awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather
to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale
blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an
earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and
their masts and their flags,

And the whole sea plunged and fell on the
shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by
the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS.

They have left the doors ajar; and by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the song,
Their favorite — which I call "The Tables Turned."
Evelyn begins it "O diviner Air."

EVELYN.

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!
A sweet voice that—you scarce could better that.
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH.

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,

Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!
Marvelously like, their voices — and themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the other,
As one is somewhat graver than the other—
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle, whom
You count the father of your fortune, longs
For this alliance: let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt
Being a watchful parent, you are taken
With one or other: tho' sometimes I fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt
Between the two—which must not be—which might
Be death to one: they both are beautiful:
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust it: she?
No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.
Woo her and gain her then: no wavering, boy!
The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.
Not so: their mother and her sister loved
More passionately still.

But that my best
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,
And that I know you worthy everyway
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath
To part them, or part from them: and yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands in your
view
From this bay window—which our house has
held
Three hundred years—will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,
A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own
Were silver, "get them wedded" would he say.
And once my prattling Edith ask'd him
"why?"
"Ay, why?" said he, "for why should I go
lame?"
Then told them of his wars, and of his wound.
For see—this wine—the grape from whence it
flow'd
Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,
When that brave soldier, down the terrible
ridge
Plunged in the last fierce charge at Waterloo,
And caught the laming bullet. He left me
this
Which yet retains a memory of its youth,
As I of mine, and my first passion. Come!
Here's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name: no fault
of mine!
You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-time
By change of feather: for all that, my boy,
Some birds are sick and sullen when they
moult

An old and worthy name! but mine that stirr'd
Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.
I care not for a name—no fault of mine.
Once more—a happier marriage than my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.
The highway running by it leaves a breadth
Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,
One bright May morning in a world of song,
I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aerial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd
Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.
The face of one there sitting opposite,
On whom I brought a strange unhappiness,
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
May seem—with goodly rhyme and reason for it—
Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet once, when first
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
A moonless night with storm—one lightning-fork
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd there
The full day after, yet in retrospect
That [illegible] than momentary thunder sketch
Of lak[illegible]d mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face for me.
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.
For look you here—the shadows are too deep,
And like the critic's blurring comment make
The veriest beauties of the work appear
The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown: the lips
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro' sense and soul
And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping beechen boughs
Of our New Forest. I was there alone;
The phantom of the whirling landaulet
For ever past me by: when one quick peal
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering glades
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happiness,
And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing me
Call'd me to join them; so with these I spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,
The worse for her, for me! was I content?

Ay—no, not quite; for now and then I thought
Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright May,
Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith—that a man's ideal
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with Plato's God
Not findable here—content, and not content,
In some such fashion as a man may be
That having had the portrait of his friend
Drawn by an artist, looks at it and says,
"Good! very like! not altogether he."

As yet I had not bound myself by words,
Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love me. Then came the day when I,
Flattering myself that all my doubts were fools
Born of the fool this Age that doubts of all—
Not I that day of Edith's love or mine—
Had braced my purpose to declare myself:
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a word.
I spoke it—told her of my passion, seen
And lost and found again, had got so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell—I heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the doors—
On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health again,
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—there,
There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,
The sisters closed in one another's arms,
Their people throng'd about them from the hall,

And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honor—Bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counter-pressures of the yielded hand
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes
Upon me when she thought I did not see—
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her.
Loving the other? do her that great wrong?
Had I not dream'd I lov'd her yestermorn?
Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and form?
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there—
Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of it—
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—
What end but darkness could ensue from this
For all the three? So Love and Honor jarr'd
Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:
"My mother bids me ask," (I did not tell you—
A widow with less guile than many a child.
God help the wrinkled children that are Christ's
As well as the plump cheek—she wrought us harm,
Poor soul, not knowing)—"are you ill?" (so ran

The letter) "you have not been here of late.
You will not find me here. At last I go
On that long-promised visit to the North.
I told your wayside story to my mother
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Farewell.
Pray come and see my mother. Almost blind
With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks
She sees you when she hears. Again farewell."

Cold words from one I had hoped to warm so far
That I could stamp my image on her heart!
"Pray come and see my mother, and farewell."
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish, strange!
What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity
Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vext myself
And all in vain for her—cold heart or none—
No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear
To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won,
For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,
Because the simple mother work'd upon
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.
But on that day, not being all at ease,
I from the altar glancing back upon her,
Before the first "I will," was utter'd, saw
The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, passionless—
"No harm, no harm," I turn'd again, and placed
My ring upon th[illegible]ger of my bride.
So, when we [illegible]ed, Edith spoke no word,

She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn clung
In utter silence for so long, I thought
"What, will she never set her sister free?"

We left her, happy each in each, and then,
As tho' the happiness of each in each
Were not enough, must fain have torrents, lakes,
Hills, the great things of Nature and the fair,
To lift us as it were from commonplace,
And help us to our joy. Better have sent
Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,
To change with her horizon, if true Love
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not live
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers,
Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-day
The great Tragedian, that had quench'd herself
In that assumption of the bridesmaid—she
That loved me—our true Edith—her brain broke
With over-acting, till she rose and fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain
To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray
Before that altar—so I think; and there
They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we knew.
I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once

The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had
sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past away:
And on our home-return the daily want
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by-and-by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence
Of nature, or desire, that her lost child
Should earn from both the praise of heroism,
The mother broke her promise to the dead,
And told the living daughter with what love
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the
twins—
Did I not tell you they were twins?—prevail'd
So far that no caress could win my wife
Back to that passionate answer of full heart
I had from her at first. Not that her love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous wail
For ever woke the unhappy Past again,
Till that dead bridesmaid meant to be my
bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and I fear'd
The very fountains of her life were chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her here, and
there
She [illegible] a child, whom reverently we call'd
Edith; and in the second year was born
A second—this I named from her own self

Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—she joined,
In and beyond the grave, that one she loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering all
The love they both have borne me, and the love
I bore them both—divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the grave—
I know not which of these I love the best.

But you love Edith; and her own true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn—
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,
And not without good reason, my good son—
Is yet untouch'd; and I that hold them both
Dearest of all things—well, I am not sure—
But if there lie a preference either way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
"Most dearest" be a true superlative—
I think I likewise love your Edith most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL.*

I.

'Ouse-keeper sent tha my lass, fur New Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goä wi' tha back: all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breäks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an' 'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver not took to she:
But Nelly the last of the cletch,† I liked 'er [illegible]t on 'em all,
Fur hoffen we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever at fall:

*See note to "Northern Cobbler."
†A brood of chickens.

An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord, but
Miss Annie she said it wur draäins,
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an' arn'd
naw thanks fur 'er paäins.
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer, I han't
gotten none!
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and,
an' owd Squire's gone.

III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass: tha dosn' knaw
what that be?
But I knaws the law, I does, for the lawyer ha
towd it me.
"When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by the
fault o' that ere maäle—
The gells they counts fur nowt, and the next
un he taäkes the taäil."

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony
harm on 'im lass?—
Naay sit down—naw 'urry—sa cowd!—hev
another glass!
Straänge an' cowd furthe time! we may hap-
pen a fall o' snaw—
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but I
likes to knaw.
An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt booklarn'd: but 'e
does not coom fro' the shere;
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we
haätes booklarnin' ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an' niver lookt arter the land—
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes—'e 'ed hallus a booäk i' 'is 'and,
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booäks, thaw nigh upo' seventy year.
An' boöks, what's boöks? thou knaws thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils, an' the laywer he towd it me
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he couldn't cut down a tree!
"Drat the trees," says I, to be sewer I haätes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an' they sucks the muck fro' the grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied to the tramps goin' by—
An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi' hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse to '[illegible]
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' was 'untin' arter the men,
An' hallus a-dallackt* an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,

*Overdrest in gay colors.

While 'e sit like a graät glimmer-gowk* wi' 'is
glasses athurt 'is noäse,
An' 'is noäso sa grufted wi' snuff es it couldn't
be scroob'd awaäy,
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e snifft up a
box in a daäy,
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the
birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved it
to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but
Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e didn't
take kind to it like;
But I äeärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry† owd book
thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I
knaw'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow
much—fur an owd scratted stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got
a brown pot an' a boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goa, wi
good dowd o' the Queen,
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which
was a shaame to be seen;
But 'e niver loökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not
seed to owt,
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but boöks, an'
boöks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

*Owl. †Filthy.

VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep 'em all clear,
Thaw es long es she lived I niver had none of 'er darters 'ere;
But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an' me,
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em to tea.
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,
An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses.—I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er mother afoor—
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver derken'd my door.

IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd gotten afright at last,
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they foller'd sa fast;
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,
"Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I oäps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saäve mysen yit."

X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e swears, an' 'e says to 'im "Noa.

I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be
dang'd if I iver let goa!
Coom! coom! feyther," 'e says, "why shouldn't
thy booöks be sowd?
I hears es soom 'o thy booöks mebbe worth
their weight i' gowd."

XI.

Heäps an heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em,
belong'd to the Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i' the middle
to kindle the fire;
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to
nowt at the saäle,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to
cut off 'is taäil.

XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e were that
outdacious at 'oäm,
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell wi' a
small-tooth coämb—
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk wi'
the farmer's aäle,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e wouldn't cut
off the taäil.

XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and a thurn
be a-grawin' theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the Maäy es I
see'd it to-year—
Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it gied me a
scare tother night,

Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the derk,
fur it looökt sa white.
"Billy," says 'e, "hev a joomp!"—thaw the
banks o' the beck be sa high,
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw
niver a hair wur awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an' Charlie
'e brok 'is neck,
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e lost 'is
taäil i' the beck.

XIV.

Sa 'is taäl wur lost an' is booöks wur gone an'
'is boy wur deäd,
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e niver
not lift oop 'is 'eäd
Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e smiled, fur 'e
hedn't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried togither, an' this
wur the hend.

XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the mooney,
but hes the pride,
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the tother
side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, howsiver
they praäy'd an' praäy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves their
debts to be paäid.
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor owd
Squire i' the wood,
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they weänt
niver coom to naw good.

XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o' coorse she be gone to the bad!
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet'arts she niver 'ed none—
Straänge an' unheppen* Miss Lucy! we naämed her "Dot an' gaw one!"
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out ony harm i' the legs,
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäd as bald as one o' them heggs,
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big i' the mouth as a cow,
An' saw she mun hammergrate,† lass, or she weänt git a maate onyhow!
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor my awn foälks to my faäce
"A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev to be larn'd her awn plaäce,"
Hes fur Miss Hannie, the heldest, hes now be a-grawin' so howd,
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt not fit to be towd!

XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd Miss Annie to saäy
Es I should be talkin agean 'em, es soon es they went awaäy,
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they went, an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,

*Ungainly, awkward. †Emigrate.

Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is gells
es belong'd to the land;
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere
nor theer!
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur hup-
puds o' twenty year.

XVIII.

An they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I hallus
deal'd wi the Hall,
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they
knaw'd what a hegg wur an' all;
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they wasn't
that easy to please,
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laäid
big heggs es tha seeas;
An' I niver puts saäme* i' my butter, they
does it at Willis's farm,
Taäste another drop o' the wine—tweänt do
tha naw harm.

XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taüil in 'is 'and,
an' owd Squire's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my night-
cap wur on;
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he coom'd
last night sa laäte—
Pluksh!!!† the hens i' the peas! why didn't tha
hesp the gaäte?

*Lard.

†A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowls.

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

Our doctor had call'd in another, I never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of other lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes, but they said too of him
He was happier usging the knife than in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he look'd so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who would break their jests on the dead,
And mangled the living dog that had loved him and fawn'd at his knee—
Drench'd with the hellish oorali—that ever such things should be!

II.

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of our children would die

But for the voice of Love, and the smile, and
the comforting eye—
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seem'd
out of its place—
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all but a
hopeless case:
And he handled him gently enough; but his
voice and his face were not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it
and made up his mind,
And he said to me roughly "The lad will need
little more of your care."
"All the more need," I told him, "to seek the
Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all his children here, and I pray for
them all as my own:"
But he turn'd to me, "Ay, good woman, can
prayer set a broken bone?"
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know
that I heard him say
"All very well—but the good Lord Jesus has
had his day."

III.

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It
will come by and by.
O how could I serve in the wards if the hope of
the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the
loathsome smells of disease
But that He said "Ye do it to me, when ye do
it to these"?

IV.

So he went. And we past to this ward where
the younger children are laid:
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our
meek little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have lost her
who loved her so much—
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive
plant to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved
me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found
in a child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used to
send her the flowers;
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em,
talk to 'em hours after hours!
They that can wander at will where the works
of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from a cow-
slip out of the field;
Flowers to these "spirits in prison" are all
they can know of the spring.
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the
waft of an Angel's wing;
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her
thin hands crost on her breast—
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we
thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor said
"Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll never
live through it, I fear."

V.

I walked with our kindly old doctor as far as
the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward; the child didn't
see I was there.

VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so grieved
and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd from
her cot to the next,
"He says I shall never live thro' it, O Annie,
what shall I do?"
Annie consider'd. "If I," said the wise little
Annie, "was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me,
for Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there: 'Little children
should come to me.'"
(Meaning the print that you gave us, I find
that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children
about his knees.)
"Yes, and I will," said Emmie, "but then if I
call to the Lord,
How should he know that it's me? such a lot
of beds in the ward!"
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she con-
sider'd and said:
"Emmie, you put our your arms, and you
leave 'em outside on the bed—
The Lord has so much to see to! but, Emmie,
you tell it him plain,

It's the little girl with her arms lying out on
the counterpane."

VII.

I had sat three nights by the child—I could
not watch her for four—
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could do
it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought
that it would never pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of
hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as
I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm
and the darkness without;
My sleep was broken besides with dreams of
the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce
would escape with her life;
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd she
stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went
to see to the child.

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we believed
her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean little arms lying out on
the counterpane;
Say that His day is done! Ah, why should we
care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and
Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE.

Dead Princess, living Power, if that, which lived
True life, live on—and if the fatal kiss,
Born of true life and love, divorce thee not
From earthly love and life—if what we call
The spirit flash not all at once from out
This shadow into Substance—then perhaps
The mellow'd murmur of the people's praise
From thine own State, and all our breadth of realm,
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds in light,
Ascends to thee; and this March morn that sees
Thy soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom
Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy grave,
And thine Imperial mother smile again,
May send one ray to thee! and who can tell—
Thou—England's England-loving daughter—thou
Dying so English thou wouldst have her flag
Borne on thy coffin—where is he can swear
But that some broken gleam from our poor earth
May touch thee, while remembering thee, I lay
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds
Of England, and her banner in the East?

THE DEFENSE OF LUCKNOW.

I.

Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Lucknow—
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

II.

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we held with our lives—
Women and children among us, God help them, our children and wives!
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days or for twenty at most.
"Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post!"
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the best of the brave:
Cold were his brows when we kissed him—we laid him that night in his grave.

"Every man die at his post!" and there hail'd on our houses and halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the musket, and death while we stoopt to the spade,
Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there fell,
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot and their shell,
Death—for their spies were among us, their marksmen were told of our best,
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that could think for the rest;
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at our feet—
Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girded us round—
Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace, and death in the ground!
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and creep thro' the hole!
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him—the murderous mole!
Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the pickaxe be thro'!
Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again than before—
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is no more;

And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew!

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it chanced on a day
Soon as the blast of that underground thunderclap echo'd away,
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many fiends in their hell—
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell upon yell—
Fiercely on all the defenses our myriad enemy fell.
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder. Guard the Redan!
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily drown'd by the tide—
So many thousands that if they be bold enough, who shall escape?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are soldiers and men!
Ready! take aim at their leaders—their masses are gapp'd with our grape—
Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave flinging forward again,
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could not subdue;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were English
in heart and in limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to com-
mand, to obey, to endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison
hung but on him;
Still—could we watch at all points? we were
every day fewer and fewer.
There was a whisper among us, but only a
whisper that past:
"Children and wives—if the tigers leap into
the fold unawares—
Every man die at his post—and the foe may
outlive us at last—
Better to fall by the hands that they love, than
to fall into theirs!"
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the
enemy sprung
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our
poor palisades.
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that
your hand be as true!
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are
your flank fusillades—
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the lad-
ders to which they had clung,
Twice from the ditch where they shelter we
drive them with hand-grenades;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner
of England blew.

V.

Then on another wild morning another wild
earthquake out-tore
Clean from our lines of defense ten or twelve
good paces or more.
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from
the light of the sun—
One has leapt up on the beach, crying out:
"Follow me, follow me!"—
Mark him—he falls! then another, and him
too, and down goes he.
Had they been bold enough then, who can tell
but the traitors had won?
Boardings and rafters and doors—an embras-
ure! make way for the gun!
Now double-charge it with grape! It is
charged and we fire, and they run.
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark
face have his due!
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought
with us, faithful and few,
Fought with the bravest among us, and drove
them, and smote them, and slew,
That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in
India blew.

VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and not what
we do. We can fight!
But to be soldier all day and be sentinel all
thro' the night—
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their
lying alarms,

Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and soundings to arms,
Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that would not be heal'd,
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife,—
Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never could save us a life.
Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew—
Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls

Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls—
But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!
Dance to the pibroch!—saved!—we are saved!—is it you? is it you?
Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!
"Hold it for fifteen days!" we have held it for eighty-seven!
And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow—
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,
For I am emptier than a friar's brains
But God' is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,
Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd
They said with such heretical arrogance
Against the proud archbishop Arundel—

So much God's cause was fluent in it—is here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
"Bara!"—what use? The Shepherd, when I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard
"Dim Saesneg" passes, wroth at things of old—
No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh
He might be kindlier; happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek
About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was—thou hast come to talk our isle
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all the world.
Yet art thou thine own witness that thou bringest
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,
My frighted Wicliff-preacher whom I crost
In flying hither? that one night a crowd
Throng'd the waste field about the city gates:
The king was on them suddenly with a host.
Why there? they came to hear their preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good Lord Cobham;
Ay, for they love me! but the king—nor voice
Nor finger raised against him — took and hang'd,
Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—thirty-nine—
Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends, as rebels
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your Priest
Labels—to take the king along with him—
All heresy, treason; but to call men traitors
May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with household war,
Now reddest with the blood of holy men,
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting line
By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,*
That were my rose, there my allegiance due.
Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd doubtless dead.
So to this king I cleaved: my friend was he,
Once my fast friend: I would have given my life
To help his own from scathe, a thousand lives
To save his soul. He might have come to learn
Our Wicliff's learning; but the worldly Priests
Who fear the king's hard common-sense should find

*Richard II.

What rotten piles uphold their mason-work,
Urge him to foreign war. O had he will'd
I might have stricken a lusty stroke for him,
But he would not; far liever led my friend
Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not: whether that heirless flaw
In his throne's title make him feel so frail,
He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,
So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of this world,
Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my dear friend!
Burnt, too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!
Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!
Lest the false faith make merry over them!
Two—nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,
Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
Before thy light, and cry continually—
Cry—against whom?
Him, who should bear the sword
Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly boy;
Who took the world so easily heretofore,
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him
Who gibed and japed—in many a merry tale
That shook our sides—at Pardoners, Summoners,
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
And nunneries, when the wild hour and the wine
Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,
Or Amurath of the East?
Better to sink
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits
Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and mine,
Thy comrade—than to persecute the Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,
The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks
Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten
Into adulterous living, or such crimes
As holy Paul—a shame to speak of them—
Among the heathen—
Sanctuary granted
To bandit, thief, assassin—yea to him
Who hacks his mother's throat—denied to him,
Who finds the Savior in his mother tongue.
The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine—
The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,
God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.
Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant
To course and range thro' all the world, should be
Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church—
Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life
Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,
O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here.
Here is the copse, the fountain and—a Cross!
To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.
Rather to thee, green boscage, work of God,
Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-tree!
Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn
By this good Wicliff mountain down from heaven,
And speaking clearly in thy native tongue—
No Latin—He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me
To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,
God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood
And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend
By this time should be with me.) "Images?"
"Bury them as God's truer images
Are daily buried." "Heresy. — Penance?"
"Fast,
Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a man repent,
Do penance in his heart, God hears him."
"Heresy—
Not shriven, not saved?" "What profits an ill Priest
Between me and my God? I would not spurn
Good counsel of good friends, but shrive myself
No, not to an Apostle." "Heresy."
(My friend is long in coming.) "Pilgrimages?"
"Drink, bagpipes, reveling, devil's-dances, vice.
The poor man's money gone to fat the friar.
Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?"
"Heresy"—

(Hath he been here—not found me—gone again?
Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?)
"Bread—
Bread left after the blessing?" how they stared,
That was their main test-question—glared at me!
"He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He veils
His flesh in bread, body and bread together."
Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd wolves,
"No bread, no bread. God's body!" Archbishop, Bishop,
Priors, Canons, bellringers, Parish-clerks—
"No bread, no bread!"—"Authority of the Church,
Power of the keys!"—Then I, God help me, I
So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole days—
I lost myself and fell from evenness,
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since
Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth
Into the church, had only prov'n themselves
Poisoners, murderers. Well—God pardon all—
Me, then, and all the world—yea, that proud Priest,
That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,
That traitor to King Richard and the truth,
Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
Amen!
Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life
Be by me in my death.
Those three! the fourth
Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they.
On them the smell of burning had not past,

That was a miracle to convert the king.
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
What miracle could turn? He here again,
He thwarting their traditions of Himself,
He would be found a heretic to Himself,
And doom'd to burn alive.
So, caught, I burn.
Burn? heathen men have borne as much as this,
For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,
Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;
For every other cause is less than mine.
The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,
Her love of light quenching her fear of pain—
How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?
Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,
God willing, I will burn for Him.
Who comes?
A thousand marks are set upon my head.
Friend?—foe, perhaps—a tussle for it then!
Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,
I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with thee?
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
None? I am damn'd already by the Priest
For holding there was bread where bread was none—
No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.
Lead on then. Up the mountain? Is it far?

Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy
hand.
I am not like to die for lack of bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.*

*He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

COLUMBUS.

Chains, my good lord: in your raised brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit him
Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet
Before his people, like his brother king?
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the king, the queen
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell them all
The story of my voyage, and while I spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the "Peace, be still!"
And when I ceased to speak, the king, the queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted into tears,
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the waste.
And then the great "Laudamus" rose to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,

As holy John had prophesied of me
Gave glory and more empire to the kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains for him
Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the Dragon's
mouth,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic queen—
Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals we—
Our title, which we never mean to yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,
But our amends for all we might have done—
The vast occasion of our stronger life—
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your
Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter—earth
A sphere.

Were you at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all Spain,
All their cosmogonies, their astronomies:
Guess-work they guess'd it, but the golden
guess
Is morning star to the full round of truth.
No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;
Some thought it heresy, but that would not
hold.
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a tent
Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat:
Some cited old Lactantius: could it be

That trees grew downward, rain fell upward, men
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,
The great Augustine wrote that none could breathe
Within the zone of heat; so might there be
Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was clean
Against God's word: thus was I beaten back,
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,
And thought to turn my face from Spain, appeal
Once more to France or England; but our Queen
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses
Were half-assured this earth might be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
All glory to the mother of our Lord,
And Holy Church, from whom I never swerved
Not even by one hair's breadth of heresy,
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—I sail'd
On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights
Of my first crew, their curses and their groans.
The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,
The compass, like an old friend false at last
In our most need, appall'd them, and the wind
Still westward, and the weedy seas—at length
The landbird, and the branch with berries on it,
The carven staff—and last the light
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light

Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad sky
Of dawning over—not those alien palms,
The marvel of that fair new nature—not
That Indian isle, but our most ancient East
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat
Thro' all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardins,
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
Jacynth, and amethyst — and those twelve gates,
Pearl—and I woke, and thought— death — I shall die—
I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life
To walk within the glory of the Lord
Sunless and moonless, utter light—but no!
The Lord had sent this bright, strange dream to me
To mind me of the secret vow I made
When Spain was waging war against the Moor—
I strove myself with Spain against the Moor.
There came two voices from the Sepulcher,
Two friars crying that if Spain should oust
The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I vow'd
That, if our Princes harken'd to my prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulcher from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prestor John,
And cast it to the Moor: but had I brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all
The gold that Solomon's navies carried home,
Would that have gilded me? Blue blood of Spain
Tho' quartering your own royal arms of Spain,
I have not: blue blood and black blood of Spain,
The noble and the convict of Castile,
Howl'd me from Hispaniola; for you know
The flies at home, that ever swarm about
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur down
Truth in the distance—these outbuzz'd me so
That even our prudent king, our righteous queen—
I pray'd them being so calumniated
They would commission one of weight and worth
To judge between my slander'd self and me—
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
They sent me out his tool, Bovadilla, one
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed—who sack'd
My dwelling, seized upon my papers, loosed

My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing, gave
All but free leave for all to work the mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home in chains,
And gathering ruthless gold—a single piece
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos—so
They tell me—weigh'd him down into the abysm—
The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my lord,
I swear to you I heard his voice between
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,
"O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy birth?
Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-sea?
Set thee in light till time shall be no more?
Is it I who have deceived thee or the world?
Endure! thou hast done so well for men, that men
Cry out against thee: was it otherwise
With mine own Son?"

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when drowning hope
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his voice,

"Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,
Fear not." And I shall hear his voice again—
I know that he has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work his will—
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone,
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and king—
The first discoverer starves—his followers, all
Flower into fortune—our world's way—and I
Without a roof that I can call mine own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel scum
I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,
Villainy, violence, avarice, of your Spain
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,
Their wives and children Spanish concubines,
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in blood,
Some dead of hunger, some beneath the scourge,
Some over-labor'd, some by their own hands,—
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature, kill
Their babies at the breast for hate of Spain—
Ah God, the harmless people whom we found
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
Who took us for the very Gods from Heaven,
And we have sent them very fiends from Hell;
And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic Queen
Smiles on me, saying, "Be thou comforted!

This creedless people will be brought to Christ
And own the holy governance of Rome."

But who could dream that we, who bore the Cross
Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalized the Cross,
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe
These hard memorials of our truth to Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term
Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet
Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's
Own voice to justify the dead—perchance
Spain once the most chivalric race on earth,
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm on earth,
So made by me, may seek to unbury me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.
Then some one standing by my grave will say,
"Behold the bones of Christopher Colon"—
"Ay, but the chains, what do they mean—the chains?"—
I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
Who then will have to answer, "These same chains

Bound these same bones back thro' the Atlantic
sea,
Which he unchain'd for all the world to come."

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in
Hell
And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do—for the moment. Stay, my son
Is here anon: my son will speak for me
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind
Bone against bone. You will not. One last
word:

You move about the Court, I pray you tell
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one,
Whose life has been no play with him and his
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,
Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and con-
doned—
That I am loyal to him till the death,
And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first
voyage,
Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic
faith,
Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
To whom I send my prayer by night and day—
She is gone—but you will tell the King, that I,
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd with
pains
Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,
And readier, if the King would hear, to lead

One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you have dared
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor thanks!
I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND. A. D. 700.)

I.

I was the chief of the race—he had stricken my father dead—
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would strike off his head.
Each of them look'd like a king, and was noble in birth as in worth,
And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest race upon earth.
Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero of song,
And each of them liefer had died than have done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sail'd on a Friday morn—
He that had slain my father the day before I was born.

II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and there on the shore was he.
But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd at before,
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without sound, and the long waterfalls
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the mountain walls,
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm flourish'd up beyond sight,
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above it there flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull couldn't low, and the dog couldn't bark.
And round it we went, and thro' it, but never a murmur, a breath—
It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet as death,
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for whenever we strove to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter than any flittermouse-shriek;
And the men that were mighty of tongue and could raise such a battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a thousand lances and die—
O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so flus-ter'd with anger were they
They almost fell on each other; but after we sailed away.

IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we landed, a score of wild birds
Cried from the topmost summit with human voices and words;
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever their voices peal'd
The steer fell down at the plow and the harvest died from the field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of the cattle went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the dwelling broke into flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds ran into the hearts of my crew,
Till they shouted along with the shouting and seized one another and slew;
But I drew them the one from the other; I saw that we could not stay,
And we left the dead to the birds and we sail'd with our wounded away.

V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers: their breath met us out on the seas,
For the Spring and the middle Summer sat each on the lap of the breeze;
And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and the dark-blue clematis, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom the long convolvulus hung;
And the topmost spire of the mountain was lilies in lieu of snow,

And the lilies like glaciers winded down, running out below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the blaze of gorse, and the blush
Of millions of roses that sprang without leaf or a thorn from the bush;
And the whole isle-side flashing down from the peak without ever a tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky to the blue of the sea;
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and vaunted our kith and our kin,
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and chanted the triumph of Finn,
Till each like a golden image was pollen'd from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst in the middle-day heat.
Blossom and blossom, and promise of blossom, but never a fruit!
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we hated the isle that was mute,
And we tore up the flowers by the million and flung them in bight and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits: all round from the cliffs and the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little sun on the tawny sand,

And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted
over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jewel'd throne
thro' the fragrant air,
Glowing with all-color'd plums and with
golden masses of pear,
And the crimson and scarlet of berries that
flamed upon bine and vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the poisonous
pleasure of wine;
And the peak of the mountain was apples, the
hugest that ever were seen,
And they prest, as they grew, on each other,
with hardly a leaflet between,
And all of them redder than rosiest health or
than utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended, the very
sunset aflame;
And they stay'd three days, and we gorged and
we madden'd, till every one drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him, and ever
they struck and they slew;
And myself, I had eaten but sparely, and
fought till I sunder'd the fray,
Then I bade them remember my father's
death, and we sail'd away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we were
lured by the light from afar,
For the peak sent up one league of fire to the
Northern Star;
Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely
could stand upright,

For the whole Isle shudder'd and shook like a man in a mortal affright;
We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged, and so crazed that at last
There were some leap'd into the fire; and away we sail'd, and we past
Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer than air:
Down we look'd: what a garden! O bliss, what a Paradise there!
Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow deep
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
And three of the gentlest and best of my people, whate'er I could say,
Plunged head down in the sea, and the Paradise trembled away.

VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the heavens lean low on the land,
And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a sunbright hand,
Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man, as he rose from his rest,
Bread enough for his need till the laborless day dipt under the West;
And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O never was time so good!
And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and the boast of our ancient blood,
And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by the gurgle of springs,

And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the glories of fairy kings;
But at length we begin to be weary, to sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the sun-bright hand of the dawn,
For there was not an enemy near, but the whole green Isle was our own,
And we took to playing at ball, and we took to throwing the stone.
And we took to playing at battle, but that was a perilous play,
For the passion of battle was in us, we slew and we sail'd away.

IX.

And we came to the Isle of Witches and heard their musical cry—
"Come to us, O come," in the stormy ren of a sky
Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn on the beautiful shapes,
For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on each of the loftiest capes.
And a hundred ranged on the rock like white seabirds in a row,
And a hundred gambol'd and pranced on the wrecks in the sand below,
And a hundred splash'd from the ledges, and bosom'd the burst of the spray,
But I knew we should fall on each other, and hastily sail'd away.

x.

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of the Double Towers,
One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved all over with flowers,
But an earthquake always moved in the hollows under the dells,
And they shock'd on each other and butted each other with clashing of bells,
And the daws flew out of the Towers and jangled and wrangled in vain,
And the clash and boom of the bells rang into the heart and the brain,
Till the passion of battle was on us, and all took sides with the Towers,
There were some for the clean-cut stone, there were more for the carven flowers,
And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other, and after we sail'd away.

xi.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who had sail'd with St. Brendan of yore,
He had lived ever since on the Isle and his winters were fifteen score,
And his voice was low as from other worlds, and his eyes were sweet,
And his white hair sank to his heels and his white beard fell to his feet,
And he spake to me, "O Maeldune, let be this purpose of thine!

Remember the words of the Lord when he told
us 'Vengeance is mine!'
His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or in
single strife,
Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each taken
a life for a life,
Thy father had slain his father, how long shall
the murder last?
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the Past
to be Past.''
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and we
pray'd as we heard him pray,
And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly we
sail'd away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown from,
and there on the shore was he,
The man that had slain my father. I saw him
and let him be.
O'weary was I of the trouble, the strife and
the sin,
When I landed again, with a tithe of my men,
on the Isle of Finn.

THE END.

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